

100+ Volunteers Join Us In a Beautification and Clean-Up of Oakland, California

Markus von Euw and Bento Leal
September 11, 2016



On Saturday and Sunday morning, September 10-11, 2016, more than 100 volunteers, including college students, families, military veterans, and first responder personnel gathered and participated in a beautification and clean-up effort on the streets of Oakland, California. This effort was in honor of those who lost their lives in the 9/11 tragedy 15 years ago.



Councilman Noel Gallo and his staff, and Unificationist Markus von Euw of Service for Peace, spearheaded preparations for the weekend's activities.



At the Saturday morning kickoff, Mr. Gallo welcomed everyone to the Day of Service and Remembrance saying, “We are doing this work this weekend to remember those who lost their lives on 9/11, and also as a commitment to work together to clean up our own city, and that we do it to show the young people—our children—that this is what living in a community is all about.” Mr. Gallo invited Markus to give an opening prayer. A police lieutenant then led everyone in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.



Congresswoman Barbara Lee spoke words of appreciation for all who came out to help. She told her own story of being told to flee the Capitol Building in Washington, D.C. on that 9/11 morning, and seeing the smoke billowing from the explosion at the Pentagon where many lost their lives. She gave special appreciation to all the first responders who risked their own lives on that day, and expressed the same appreciation to the first responders present at the event in Oakland, particularly officers from the Oakland Police Department, California Highway Patrol, and Oakland Firefighters. “You go to work every day risking your lives to protect us, and we sincerely thank you for that,” she said.



Volunteers were then divided into teams and spread out to do their clean-up and beautification work, including digging out weeds and overgrown shrubs around the Animal Shelter of Oakland to prepare for a giant mural to be painted on the walls of the shelter (volunteers from Home Depot joined the effort and brought motorized equipment to help do the job), filling in tree holes along a long section of International Boulevard with wood chips and cleaning up all the trash along the way in the ongoing beautification effort to make the city cleaner and safer for all, picking up litter, discarding broken furniture and other trash resulting in two dump truck loads by Waste

Management by the end of the weekend, and picking up items from illegal dumping, including old mattresses, furniture, tires, and other objects.

Partners in the two-day event included Oakland City Council, Oakland Public Works Dept., Home Depot, School of Urban Mission, the Bay Area Family Church, and members of the community.